

# Varicella (Chickenpox) Outbreak

## Quick Reference Guide for Schools, Camps and Daycare Facilities

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Managing an outbreak of varicella entails surveillance, case identification, outbreak confirmation and institution of preventive and control measures. All outbreaks, including varicella need to be reported to the local health department **immediately**.

### **Varicella Outbreak Case Definition:**

#### **5 or more cases in a congregate setting that are epidemiologically linked**

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It is important to remember that a single varicella case is a potential source for an outbreak, and the case should be excluded or isolated from the setting (e.g., school, camp, daycare) immediately.

If you identify an outbreak:

1. Immediately notify your local health department and the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE) at 800-423-1271 of the outbreak.
2. Start a line list of cases. A blank line list can be found at:  
[http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/IBD\\_VPD/VPD/Documents/Varicella\\_Outbreak\\_Line\\_List.pdf](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/IBD_VPD/VPD/Documents/Varicella_Outbreak_Line_List.pdf)
3. Implement Varicella control measures:
  - Immediately exclude or isolate cases from the group or school setting until all blisters are crusted over, generally 5 days after rash onset
  - Confirm that it is a varicella outbreak (with the assistance of the DIDE Outbreak Team)
    - Atypical varicella is difficult to diagnose and may require laboratory confirmation for appropriate outbreak management. In these circumstances, collect specimens for testing using the polyester swab method outlined on DIDE website.
  - Verify the vaccination status of individuals in the setting (e.g. school, camp, daycare)
    - Recommend 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of varicella vaccine for those with a single dose
    - Refer susceptible pregnant individuals to their OB/GYN or other healthcare provider
  - Send outbreak notification letter to exposed individuals and/or the parents/guardians of minors
  - Continue to identify cases and report to the outbreak team

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